



News Release

For Immediate Release

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National Wildfire Prevention Education Team Deployed in Virginia

Dry conditions are cause for concern

The George Washington/Jefferson National Forest and the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) are working together to help residents in southwest Virginia prevent wildfires as the region enters one of the driest fall fire seasons in many years. Funded by the USDA Forest Service, a National Wildfire Prevention and Education Team (WFPET) working out of the Matthews State Forest, southwest of Galax, begins their two-week assignment on October 13.

The team will work closely with the USDA Forest Service ranger districts and VDOF work units in the area to assess the local conditions and needs. The team's primary focus will be to help residents understand how to prevent wildfires under these extremely dry conditions, and to urge them to take personal responsibility to reduce wildfire risks in and around their homes.

The WFPET team consists of three individuals: a team leader, a team member who specializes in graphic design, and a Public Information Officer. "WFPET members combine their skills and apply cultural awareness to develop and use cause-specific prevention techniques and messages," explained Fred Turck, manager of the VDOF Wildfire Prevention Program. "This is a characteristic unique to WFPETs that has consistently proved to be effective in reducing human-caused wildfires."

For more information about this outreach effort in southwest Virginia, please contact Fred Turck at 434-220-8052 or fred.turck@dof.virginia.gov

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The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in

forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 Billion annually.

Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.